

**House Report 107-116 - AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD  
AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES  
APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2002**

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## **ADDITIONAL VIEWS**

### ***OVERVIEW***

We believe that the Committee has produced a reasonable bill, given the resources available to it.

We do have serious concerns about four important issues--food safety, the Global Food for Education Initiative, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program and biofuels.

We regret that the Committee bill does not adequately address what we believe are important needs in each of these areas. We will continue to press for the resources needed in these areas as this bill moves forward.

### ***IMPROVING FOOD SAFETY***

In the area of food safety, some of the most commonly cited statistics are that 76 million Americans become ill, 325,000 require hospitalization and 5,000 die every year from foodborne illnesses. These statistics come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

These statistics are disturbing. Clearly, our food safety system is in need of improvement.

The FDA acknowledged that there are shortfalls in our current food inspection process, in testimony before the Subcommittee this year.

The agency said, 'The inspectional coverage of food manufacturers, particularly high risk manufacturers, has been inadequate over the past several years.'

With respect to imported foods, the agency said:

Inspections of imported products are also of great concern. FDA physically inspects less than one percent of all imported products brought into the U.S. that are under FDA's jurisdiction. The vast majority of active pharmaceutical ingredients manufactured overseas are imported to the U.S. The importation of food from other countries has been growing rapidly over the past decade, and continues to grow. In FY 2002, we expect to receive 7 million food

import entries. FDA must improve foreign inspection and physical port inspection coverage and oversight of foreign producers to be able to maintain the safety of products on that market that we believe Americans expect and demand.

The agency that is charged with ensuring the safety of so much of the food we eat clearly believes more must be done.

During Committee consideration of the bill, Representative Rosa DeLauro offered an amendment that would have begun the process of substantially enhancing food safety inspection in this country.

The amendment would have provided \$213 million in fiscal year 2002 to FDA and USDA for food safety. The funding would have put us on a path to achieving what the FDA identified before the Subcommittee this year as an 'optimum' domestic food facility inspection schedule. In addition, it would have begun to move us toward a level of 10% inspection by FDA of imported foods. Finally, it included \$50 million for the Food Safety and Inspection Service at the Department of Agriculture so that it could fund actions it deemed necessary to improve FSIS's inspection of the meat and poultry products over which it has responsibility.

This important amendment was unfortunately defeated by a vote of 23 to 29.

The defeat of this amendment was regrettable. But we will continue to work this year to give FDA and USDA the resources necessary to make significant improvements in the safety of the foods we eat every day.

## ***GLOBAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION INITIATIVE***

In 2000, the United States announced an important new international food aid initiative for children. Called the 'Global Food for Education Initiative,' the program is currently underway in this fiscal year, 2001.

Two of its leading proponents are Ambassador George McGovern and former Senator Bob Dole.

The program is designed to provide a nutritious meal to children--both to feed them and to encourage them to remain in school. Working through the United Nations World Food Program, private voluntary organizations and foreign governments, the program aims to feed about 9 million children in 38 countries.

But the Secretary of Agriculture has not decided whether to continue this program in fiscal year 2002, leaving program participants and beneficiaries uncertain about its future.

Bipartisan bills have recently been introduced in both the House and Senate to continue the program.

While those bills are under consideration, it is important that the future of the program be assured.

For this reason, Representative Marcy Kaptur offered an amendment during Committee markup to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to continue the GFEI program in fiscal year 2002, at the level it was implemented in fiscal year 2001.

Unfortunately, this amendment was defeated by a vote of 26 to 32.

We urge the Department to make the decision now to continue to operate this program in fiscal year 2002. But in the meantime, we will work to secure agreement in this bill on its continuation.

### ***THE WIC PROGRAM***

The WIC program provides a very important safety net for at-risk pregnant, breastfeeding and post-partum women, infants and young children. We are concerned that the funding provided in this bill may not be sufficient.

While the bill fully funds the Administration's request for the WIC program, the request itself may be inadequate to meet the need in fiscal year 2002.

The budget indicates that the Administration's funding request funds the fiscal year 2001 participation rate for fiscal year 2002.

But because the Administration's budget itself projects an increase in the unemployment rate in fiscal year 2002, merely maintaining the fiscal year 2001 level for WIC may not be enough.

In addition, there are concerns that technical assumptions about funds that may be available to the program in fiscal year 2002 may be overly optimistic. These overly optimistic projections also put at risk the Department's ability to continue the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program for mothers and children, as well as the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

During markup, the Committee adopted report language offered by Representative Rosa DeLauro that expressed concern about the level of WIC funding and indicated that 'the Committee will monitor and review the need for additional WIC funding in advance of conference on the FY 2002 bill.'

We are pleased that the Committee adopted this language. We will work to ensure that an adequate level of funding is provided in the final FY 2002 bill for this essential program.

## **BIOFUELS**

There is no doubt that one of the most significant problems facing the United States is energy independence. The Department of Agriculture has conducted various successful research programs over the years that demonstrate that ethanol, biodiesel, and other biomass fuels can be effective alternatives for both consumers of fuels, as well as an additional source of revenue for producers.

More than \$3 billion has been invested in 55 ethanol production facilities operating in 20 different states across the country.

The ethanol industry is responsible for more than 40,000 direct and indirect jobs, creating more than \$1.3 billion in increased household income annually, and more than \$12.6 billion over the next five years.

The ethanol industry directly and indirectly adds more than \$6 billion to the American economy each year. The demand for grain created by ethanol production increases net farm income more than \$12 billion annually.

Increases in ethanol production offer enormous potential for economic growth in small rural communities. USDA has estimated that a 100 million gallon ethanol plant could create 2,250 local jobs.

Noting that not one of the more than 100 recommendations in the President's National Energy Policy explicitly directs activity by the Secretary of Agriculture, apart from the long history of the Department's involvement in these activities, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur offered an amendment that would provide \$500 million to the Secretary, under existing authorities, for research, development, technical, and financial assistance programs for biofuels, including farmer-held fuel stock reserves. Unfortunately, this amendment was defeated 18-31.

As we look for a comprehensive solution to our energy needs, the role of biofuels cannot be ignored. We urge the Department to aggressively move forward using all authorities at its disposal to maximize its support for biofuels.

DAVID OBEY.

MARCY KAPTUR.

